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Truppen: instead of making its first appearance in 1617, this word occurs as early as 1474, during the siege of Neuss: cf. *MLN.* XXXIV, 258.

Tüttel "erst nhd." The following is from a letter of Elector Albrecht Achilles, dated 3. Jan. 1474: So geen wir auch eins tutels nicht weyter, dann wie die schrift innen wird halten, *Font. austr.* XLVI, 252.

Uriasbrief: the following is a century earlier than the examples cited by Kluge: also das er nit Orias brief gefurt hat, *Publ.* LXVII, 206 (1476).

verplempern: as compounds of this stem are cited only for NHG., the following instance, dated 1430, may be of interest: durch mancher mengunge vnd plemperey wille, dy durch weybir vnd logenhaftige speyer pflegit czu geschen, *Monum.* VII, 415.

vexieren: Kluge cites an instance of the year 1553. Cf.: der Jersik ist widergekehrth keyn Prage vnd wil vns mühen vnd vexiren, *Font. austr.* XX, 530 (1468). das nieman den andern bedorfft fragen oder fexieren, ob er Frantzosisch oder Römisch küngisch wäre, *Schilling*, p. 183 (15th cent.).

Vice- "im 16. Jahrh." An additional compound, and antedating those cited, is that with *Kanzler*: der vitzcancler von Osterreich, *Font. austr.* XLII, 175 (1455).

Wallach "um 1550 im Nhd. auftretend." Cf.: do dem pfarrer das pferdt eyñ walach gestoleñ wardt, *Script. Pruss.* v, 295 (ca. 1497).

W. KURRELMAYER.

Poetic Origins and the Ballad. By LOUISE POUND. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1921.

The late Professor F. B. Gummere, "wearing all that weight of learning lightly like a flower," expounded with great charm and persuasiveness an elaborate theory concerning the origin and nature of primitive poetry. The nearest representative of primitive poetry in English is found in the older folk-songs, the popular ballads, traditional story-songs of unknown authorship. Gummere first set forth his views concerning the ballad in the Introduction to his *Old English Ballads* (Ginn, 1894). In *The Beginnings of Poetry*

(Macmillan, 1901), he treated "the rise of poetry as a social institution." He found the source of primitive poetry in the communal dance. He even believed in actual communal authorship, a hard saying. "The ballad is a song made in the dance, and so by the dance...the communal dance...is the real source of the song" (p. 321). This, of course, cannot mean an actual thinking in concert by a throng, but a process of improvisation in which many take part on some theme of immediate interest. Professor G. L. Kittredge visualizes the process thus: "Different members of the throng, one after another, may chant each his verse, composed on the spur of the moment, and the sum of these various contributions makes a song. This is communal composition, though each verse, taken by itself, is the work of an individual."¹

In *The Popular Ballad* (Houghton, 1907), not to mention some separate articles, Gummere restated his general position, and classified and discussed most helpfully the body of English ballad-poetry in Child's great collection.

Professor Louise Pound² opposes squarely the views of Gummere and his followers. Miss Pound holds that among the most primitive peoples we find individual authorship of songs. She cites in proof of her position clear-cut evidence concerning certain tribes of North American Indians, also the case of the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, called in Lippincott's *Gazetteer* "as degraded savages as any in the world." These cases are a very cogent appeal to a contemporaneous antiquity for evidence upon this disputed

¹Introduction to the one-vol. edition of *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Houghton, 1904, p. xix.

²I note here a few corrections. Professor Beers and Mr. Sharp sometimes lose a middle initial, and Professor Gummere gets a wrong one. Mr. Newell's statement about *Barbara Allen* (p. 53) concerned *New England*. See his *Games and Songs of American Children*, Harper, 2d ed., 1903, p. 78. The title of Lady Gomme's collection is *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (p. 58). What is the *Pepys Manuscript* (89)? *The Bitter Withy* and *The Holy Well* (172) are not in the Child collection. *The Wreck of the Lady Elgin* (*Lost on the Lady Elgin*) was written by Henry C. Work (212). *Silver Jack* (229) was printed by Lomax, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, xxviii, 9-10. The tramp song (230) is in the same article, p. 4. The passage from Andrew Lang (235) is taken, with minor inaccuracies, from his article on "Ballads" in the ninth ed. of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Compare the phrase quoted on p. 107. "Refrains" in the index should have many more references.

point. Mr. John Robert Moore has called attention to similar evidence about the Melanesians; he cites also the Fijians, "scarce fifty years out of cannibalism."³ Gummere, on the contrary, makes much of the Botocudos of South America, of whom a Dr. Ehrenreich tells us that they make, while dancing, "short improvised songs. . . . They never sing without dancing, never dance without singing, and have but one word to express both song and dance."⁴

Miss Pound also calls attention to the fact that the songs which we now find associated with the dance are of an entirely different type from the ballads.

Gummere recognizes fully that his theory cannot be established in a direct, positive way. He thinks that we can trace a "curve of evolution" that points back to communal conditions for primitive poetry, and even to communal authorship. That definite proof of this theory is impossible he suggests by prefixing to *The Beginnings of Poetry* two lines from Chaucer:

I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,
But I shal fynde it in a maner glose.

The student who has followed carefully Gummere's many engaging expositions of his theory will wish to add one more line from Chaucer:

Glosinge is a ful glorious thing, certeyn.

Gummere looks upon the frequent presence of a refrain in ballads and that peculiarity of style which he calls incremental repetition as pointing back directly to communal conditions, to the singing, dancing throng of primitive society. "The refrain is an organic part of the ballad . . . It establishes beyond all doubt the lyric and choral origins."⁵ "The refrain is not a development but a survival."⁶ Miss Pound opposes these positions. She notes that "refrains appear very abundantly in the later pieces and in broadsides" (77). For example, I have observed that three-fourths of the published texts of the American ballad "*Springfield Mountain*" have a refrain, usually a meaningless jingle of musical syllables. Also, modern ballads frequently offer marked examples of

³ *The Modern Language Review*, Oct., 1916, p. 391.

⁴ *The Beginnings of Poetry*, pp. 95-96.

⁵ *The Popular Ballad*, p. 73.

⁶ *The Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 257.

incremental repetition (122-123). *Progressive repetition* seems to me a better term for this feature.

Miss Pound insists, against Gummere and others, that ballad-making is not "a closed account," except for those who arbitrarily close the account by ignoring ballads of more recent origin.

Much was made by Gummere of the choral singing and dancing of ballads by the Faroe islanders. He thought this "combination of dance and song" to be "of a far more primitive type than sundry laborious dances of savage tribes who are assumed to be quite primitive in their culture."⁷ In 1906 Mr. Hjalmar Thuren published a careful study of the ballads of the Faroe Islands, which I know only in the summary of Professor Arthur Beatty. According to Beatty's report of Thuren's conclusions, "the *tunes* are derived from the Protestant hymn books," the dances were an importation from France. "The dance and lyric refrains developed in France, . . . were carried to the Scandinavian countries and there developed the ballad . . . In the Scandinavian countries this took place about 1100, very soon after that in England, in Germany about 1200, in Spain about 1400, in Italy about the same date, while France had to wait until the latter half of the fifteenth century for anything which can be called a ballad."⁸ In 1907 Gummere thought that "the ballad genesis," as he understood this genesis, "is more plainly proved for the Faroes than for any other modern people."⁹

If improvisation is natural to primitive peoples, and if tradition sometimes improves what is entrusted to it, then our older ballads, or some of them, may well have developed from simpler forms that preceded them, although it may be impossible to prove this.

We have already spoken of improvisation among the primitive Botocudos. "The persistence of the habit [of improvisation by groups] among civilized peoples in modern times," says Professor Kittredge, "is a matter of common knowledge. In the Faroe Islands, a few generations ago, it was common for a group to surround some fisherman who had been unlucky, or had otherwise laid himself open to ridicule, and to improvise a song about him, each contributing his verse or stanza. In the Russian cigarette factories, the girls who roll the cigarettes amuse themselves, while at work,

⁷ *The Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 19.

⁸ *PMLA*. xxix (1914), pp. 491-93.

⁹ *The Popular Ballad*, p. 69 n.

by composing songs about each other in a similar way. . . . Everybody has heard children engaged in the communal composition of satirical rhymes.”¹⁰

It is an interesting fact that Mrs. Mary Root Kern, more than twenty years ago, guided different groups of children, from six to twelve years of age, in the University of Chicago Elementary School, in the oral group-composition of songs, both the words and the accompanying melodies. The little ones dearly loved these songs of their own making. Mrs. Kern tells me that the evident fitness of the children for such work together suggested the experiment to her. The words and music of a number of the songs and an account of the experiment appeared in *The Elementary School Record*, Chicago, 1900 (now out of print).

Can a story-song improve in the course of oral tradition? Miss Pound looks upon this as highly improbable. A ballad is for her, practically, a poem by an individual author which has experienced more or less corruption in the course of transmission. Now, whether it begin with communal or individual creation, communal re-creation is an essential element in the life of a ballad. Gummere speaks of “the refining and ennobling process of tradition” as a possibility.¹¹ For Miss Pound, “The crudity and the unliterary quality increase with the lapse of time, and by popular preservation” (116). In general she recognizes only “the degenerative effects of oral preservation” (198). But is there any explanation of the high quality of the older English ballads, especially those embodying popular superstitions, except that tradition has exerted upon them a helpful influence? If tradition is only a corrupting agency, why are those ballads the best that have been the longest subjected to it? A writer in the *Weekly Springfield Republican* for Oct. 8, 1908, says: “There can be no doubt that the first men who attempted to work into rhyme the local events of their countryside in either Scotland or England were crude yokels, and it was not until their verses had been repeated from sire to son down several centuries, until they had been filtered, as it were, through many better minds than those of the authors, that the flaws were eliminated and the folk songs as we know them now had emerged.” A few of these expressions may be questioned, but there is some truth here.

¹⁰ Introduction to one-vol. ed. of *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, pp. xix-xx.

¹¹ *The Popular Ballad*, p. 76.

In Mr. Cecil J. Sharp's remarkable book, *English Folk-Song, Some Conclusions*, London, Novello, 1907, the chapter on "Evolution" tells us that "the conception of evolution involves the three principles of *continuity*, *variation*, and *selection*" (p. 16). He is thinking primarily of the melodies, but believes that the words and the air develop in much the same way. "The second principle, *Variation*, creates the material which renders development possible. . . . Change may produce growth, or it may be sterile; or, again, it may lead to corruption" (29). Mr. Sharp found two gifted folk-singers who introduced into their melodies half-unconscious variations, "many of them of great beauty" (23). Singers with poetical gifts would naturally vary the language, whether consciously or not, and some of these changes might persist. Changes are inevitable in songs preserved by memory.

"The function of the third principle, *Selection*," says Mr. Sharp, "is to ensure that variation shall, in certain cases, result in organic growth and development" (29). The part of the community is "to weigh, sift, and select from the mass of individual suggestions those which most accurately express the popular taste and the popular ideal; to reject the rest; and then, when more variations are produced, to repeat the process once more, and again once more. The process goes on unceasingly while the ballad lives" (31).

Is tradition, even at the present day, always an unfavorable influence? Near the close of 1814, Charles Miner, of Wilkesbarre, Penn., published an original ballad of twenty-two stanzas concerning the recent execution of James Bird, who was charged with desertion.¹² The poem passed into tradition. It was a favorite song in the neighborhood of Lake Erie, and was cherished as a vivid bit of local history. I hope to print soon in *The Journal of American Folk-Lore* a traditional version recently obtained. It reproduces Mr. Miner's poem, stanza for stanza, with remarkable accuracy. The line of the original "Here will Bird his cutlass ply" has been replaced by the less appropriate words "Ne'er will Bird his colors fly." The other changes in the phrasing are slight; they seem to me on the whole to be improvements on the author's text.

¹² The original text of *James Bird* is reprinted in *Charles Miner*, 1780-1865, by Charles F. and Elizabeth Miner Richardson, Wilkes-Barre, Penn., 1916, pp. 68-71. A copy is in The Newberry Library, Chicago.

Miss Pound offers an affirmative theory of her own as to the origin of our English ballads. She points out that a number of our earliest ballad texts are on religious subjects, the oldest of all being *Judas* (No. 23 in Child) from a manuscript of the thirteenth century. Accordingly she makes the following interesting suggestion: "The ballad, like the religious carols and the miracle plays and a great mass of ecclesiastical lyrics and narrative poetry, might be a part of that great mediæval movement to popularize for edifying reasons biblical characters and tales, a movement having its first impulse in the festival occasions of the church. Then, again like the drama, it passes from ecclesiastical hands, with edification the purpose, into secular hands, with the underlying purpose of entertainment." Later, "the religious material, having historically initial place, became submerged and ultimately well-nigh lost to view" (166-167).

In reviewing Gummere's book *The Popular Ballad*,¹³ Professor H. M. Belden pointed out that the views there set forth would make it hard to explain the origin of the excellent ballad *Mary Hamilton* (No. 173 in Child), which must have been composed after 1563. His objections would not hold against the more guarded statement of Professor Kittredge: "We have described the characteristic method of ballad authorship as improvisation in the presence of a sympathetic company which may even, at times, participate in the process. Such a description is in general warranted by the evidence; and though it cannot be proved for any of the English and Scottish ballads, is not improbable for some of them. . . . Even if none of our ballads were composed in this way, still many of them conform to a type which was established under the conditions of authorship referred to."¹⁴

All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put the question of ballad-origins back where it was before the appearance of Miss Pound's book. Her sharp challenge of widely accepted views is supported by a wealth of definite evidence and able reasoning that cannot be ignored. She is to be warmly congratulated.

Because we feel the force of Miss Pound's book, must we reject entirely the opposing views? Like Gummere, Miss Pound seems

¹³ *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, VIII, 114-27.

¹⁴ Introduction to one-vol. ed. of *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, p. xxvii.

to be trying to establish universal propositions. Universal propositions are dangerous. Perhaps Kipling had this very controversy about ballad-origins partly in mind when he said with extreme catholicity:

There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right.

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Aucassin und Nicolette. Kritischer Text mit Paradigmen und Glossar, von HERMANN SUCHIER. Neunte Auflage, bearbeitet von Walther Suchier. Paderborn, 1921.

The ninth edition of Hermann Suchier's *Aucassin und Nicolette*, from the hand of Walther Suchier, is far less prepossessing in appearance than the eighth edition, the last published by the original editor before his death. The printing is not bad,¹ but the paper is lamentably unworthy, and the necessity of economising space even on this "field-grey" product makes the text look far less attractive than in the 1913 volume. But the importance of the additional material and the changes made fully justify the new editor's publication, despite the result of post-war conditions upon its material aspect.

In the text itself we note—and welcome—a return to the MS. reading² in many cases where the eighth edition, in spite of protests made by earlier critics, still showed many unnecessary "emendations." All Hermann Suchier's worst alterations have been done away with,³ but there are still a few minor instances in which the

¹ Only two misprints are apparent, both in the text: "al apar" (20, 5) should read "ala par," and "ent" (28, 7) should read "en."

² The original MS. being, of course, unavailable to the present reviewer, he has used for purposes of comparison throughout Bourdillon's facsimile (Oxford, 1896).

³ In making these changes the editor was apparently influenced by the suggestions (offered, it must be noted, with some unnecessary sarcasm) of F. W. Bourdillon's recent edition *Aucassin et Nicolette*, Manchester, 1919; but he makes no mention of having seen or heard of it.